

**Subject: Letter of Support in FAVOR of SB816 An Act Establishing a Minimum Level of Funding Under the Education Cost Sharing Grant Formula**

Good evening.

Our family moved to Haddam 9 years ago for several reasons. It's a quiet town with little commerce tucked close to the shoreline. The school system was highly rated at the time, and had won several awards. Unfortunately, the latter is at risk due to the funding issues in our town.

Children in Haddam deserve an enriching education, just as much as children in neighboring towns. It is unfair that important programs may be cut next year and in future years due to the issues with the Education Cost Sharing Formula. The state needs to rise to the occasion and fix this inequitable formula. The formula needs to be adjusted to account for the Yankee Power Plant closing which drastically impacted our grand list. If this formula isn't changed soon, and taxes continue to rise to support basic education needs, there will be several consequences. If we continue to cut programs that parents consider necessary for children's growth and development (Spanish as an example), we will lose families to neighboring towns. It is not possible for our town to compete in the position we are currently in. Higher taxes for less resources does not equal the fair and equitable education our families are entitled to.

According to what we have heard, Haddam is the tenth most underfunded ECS town (at 42%) of all 169 municipalities. These communities must either raise more tax revenue or go without. Haddam can't compete for local businesses with a higher mill rate due to our underfunding at half of what our neighboring communities are funded. Our senior community is at risk as well, they understand they need to contribute without kids in the school system but it's unfair that they are contributing disproportionately more than those in neighboring towns.

My family believes that SB816 is a critical step to fix the funding formula for all towns in the state and has great impact to the future of Haddam. Thank you for your time.

Samantha Merwin in Haddam